Phoenix



2001 Edition

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2001



"Every moment some form grows perfect in hand or face; some tone on the hills or the sea is choicer than the rest; some mood of passion or insight or intellectual excitement is irresistibly real and attractive to us, --for that moment only. Not the fruit of experience, but experience itself, is the end...To burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life."

Walter Pater, *Conclusion to the Renaissance*

The College of New Rochelle
New Rochelle, New York 10805

Dear Reader,

Phoenix has been a publication in which The College of New Rochelle artists have expressed themselves for the past twenty-five years. As we continue this legacy of Phoenix, we can only hope to present the best of our peers to the embracing artistic community. I would like to thank Barbara Crespo and Debra Hedrick for their constant support and optimism throughout this year of new beginnings. The entire Phoenix staff would like to thank Dr. Cynthia Kraman. Her guidance has kept us determined in the creation of this Phoenix edition. I would also like to thank the contributing artists and writers who have been brave enough to publish their creative works. Much like the Phoenix bird, each publication of Phoenix is a reincarnation of the last; presenting itself as stronger, and more beautiful. These works are the revealed treasures of emerging artists. This book is the fire of our passion for the aesthetic element.

Jessica Elexis Hamilton
Editor-in-Chief

cover art:
Romance
Amy Angeles
SAS 2001
photograph of sculpture

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and the friends and family of Phoenix

Phoenix 2001 Edition Volume #26

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Phoenix

In ancient Egypt and in classical antiquity, the Phoenix was a fabulous bird associated with the worship of the sun. The Egyptian phoenix was said to be as large as an eagle, with brilliant scarlet and gold plumage and a melodious cry. Only one Phoenix existed at any time, and it lived a life span of more than 500 years. As its end approached, the Phoenix fashioned a nest of aromatic boughs and spices, set it on fire, and was consumed in the flames. From the pyre miraculously sprang a new Phoenix. The Egyptians associated the Phoenix with immortality, and that symbolism had a widespread appeal in late antiquity. It was also widely interpreted as an allegory of resurrection and life after death--ideas that also appealed to emergent Christianity.

Phoenix is also the literary & art magazine for The College of New Rochelle. Published annually in the spring of each academic year, this magazine showcases the artistic talents of The College of New Rochelle community. Submissions considered for this publication are accepted from students and faculty in the School of Arts & Sciences and the School of Nursing. All forms of art are welcome. All advertising and submissions for next year's edition can be sent to the following address: *Phoenix Literary & Art Magazine, The College of New Rochelle, 29 Castle Place, New Rochelle, NY 10805.* Correspondance may be sent electronically to : phoenixcnr@yahoo.com

The views and opinions expressed by the contributing artists do not necessarily express those of the editorial board, selection committee, staff or of The College of New Rochelle.

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Poems, Prose and Art



A Chant for Smoother Edges

It's all there in that single rose
Hanging on the wall,
Bound and inverted like a sex crime victim

All the love and hate.
All the bruises and breaks, kisses and long looks
The disposable smiles
And all the secrets, yours and mine

Everything hangs there
Preserved imperfectly in the dried petals,
Nothing left but a shadow of past glory
A minute is all you can expect from perfection

Rebecca Teetsel
SAS 2001

Ecstasy

Ecstasy is tall, bald & brown
Ecstasy comes around
changes your frowns & disappears
like a thief in the night.
Ecstasy is not always right, but
in the middle of delight when you
scream & moan & he changes his
tone.
Do you stop & think, does your
mind even seek the awareness
that he will be gone next week!
But for now Ecstasy is here, so you
have no fear. Life is so fine that
all that's on your mind is Damn!
Ecstasy is tall, bald, & brown.

Bessie E. Whitfield



Mandala
INS 101 : Dr. Malloy
collage

Thoughts to Accompany the Mandala

As we leave imprints of our natural curiosity and vulnerability

Our childhood innocence, like the dusk, has passed.

While embracing the light of a new day, we unveil the power of knowledge to write our own story.

And we wait, with fear, with hope, with passion in the night.

Light and life unfold in waves of self-consciousness stitched together in a rich garment of human connection.

The next wave will be our sons and daughters. And the story never ends.

INS101: Self in Context
Fall 2000
Dr. Malloy's class

No Looking Back

There's no looking back. I must move on. Break away from the past.
Hold back the tears. One day they'll be gone. Pretend I'm strong so
no one else knows. Inside I am dying a death so slow. I believed in
you. But what I saw was not really there. Too good to be true is truly unfair.
I have the strength to walk away. To leave you behind. To start all
over again. For so long I have lived only for you. An empty cage
once filled with hope. I have learned to leave things in the past.
That is where you belong. Our time is over, but the impression left.
I've given my all to someone who could not have cared less.
There's no looking back. I must move on. Break away from the past.
I'll hold in the pain and sorrow. The flame within flickers with hope.
I'll live my life and never think of the pain. I must move on never look back.

Tara Marie Tocci
SAS 2001

Destiny

I speak of that which I cannot see,
And imagine that which I have yet to touch.
My soul sings of the wonder it will soon become,
And the day when my mind's melody is made reality.
Though the strains of my dream's symphony
Are faint to my ears now,
A day will come when I will hear my music as
I hear the crashes of thunder; the bellowing blasts
Heralding the coming of summertime storms.
It is then that you will see my name,
Written among the stars.

Cicely Caldwell
SAS 2002

Walking Away on Gray

It will not forget the press of lips
The wet of kiss
Or brush of hand
Nor cool of dew
Nor will it betray me as you
In the gray of we

It will not cease percussion
Nor blue to touch
But red with passion
It will remember you

They will not forget the curve of smile
Nor windows brown
Nor crack of ceiling, wall or floor
Nor color of unowned flower
They will not forget the gray of together

They will not forget the smooth of press
Nor rough of shadow
Fit of glove
Nor rumble of your thunder

We will not forget the new of I love you
The old of I knew you
The lifetimes past of you and I

Time passed and I could not forget
The we, we never knew
The day you walked away on gray

Jessica Elexis Hamilton
SAS 2003

Rain Song

Rain taps at my window
I think of you
If only you could be here tonight
wrap your arms around me
I would curl up inside you
in your arms and drift off
into quiet, peaceful sleep
feeling your fingertips softly move
on my skin
drift further into the sound of you
breathing
so softly, so quietly.

I wonder how you would look
standing in the rain
water trickling down your sleek body,
how would it feel to kiss you
in the rain?
I think your lips would
drown me, soak me
more than the rain falling on me,
would thunder seem less scary
with you here?
would it sound distant
even if it was right at my window?
or would your being here silence it for me?

Rain taps at my window
slipping in a cool breeze
if you were here
I would be warm,
my bed would be warm,
my heart would feel warm,
It isn't about
having you
it's about
just being with you
here
feeling your hand in mine,
drifting off into the deep dark night
together
letting the tapping of rain
on my window
sing us to sleep.

Rain taps at my window,
I think of you
If only you could be here tonight.

Diana L. Creaturo
SAS 2002



Rain Drops
Lori Lipman
photograph

Rain

Rain can be dull
the clouds in the sky so dark,
no sun is out, boring all day
I wish the sun would come out....
to take away my darkness
Nothing to do, nothing can be done...
Good sleeping weather though
Get all your rest preparing for tomorrow's sun
Oh! Please let the sun come out, no rain or snow
Just let me be, the sun, that is

Javone Antoinette Williams
SAS 2003



Ophelia
Tara Kistler
SAS 2001
computer graphic

At Midday

Hands reach out for me high above the clouds
I can't grab them for I am far away
Laying on a bench looking up at the sky
Hands signal to me desperately as if speaking
I can't understand what they are saying
The sun gets in my eyes as if to blind me
I look away and when I look again-they're gone
I am left with the wind
No clouds
No hands
No sun

I get up and walk away

Sonsiris Tamayo
SAS 2002

I WANT TO GIVE UP!

I want to give up!
Let it all fade away!
Not give a damn
LORD...let me pray.

Our father who art in heaven,
Who gave me all of this,
Who gave me my life
ALL of which I should miss.

Lord that's in heaven,
That taught me right from wrong,
Who gave me the knowledge,
Not to follow the devil's song.

God I love you
And I know your rules...you don't bend
But forgive me Lord,
For this must end.

Come for me now
Let me live in peace
Let the rest of my life
Be lived in ease.

Come for me Lord
I truly must go,
These problems...oh Lord...

(And God Answered)

Child I know!

You must live your life
Like I intended you to.
You're not done yet.
Live your life through!

You will be happy once again.
Your pain will go.
I'm your father that's in heaven,
I am your God,
And I know.

Banae Vickers
SAS 2004

Delicate Lines

Each delicate line,
Piece
And structure that I observe was created out of one's talents
Beautiful in their own detail
Living as elements within a whole,
Not missing a piece
Feeling complete, instead of facing an emptiness of unanswered questions
Uncontrollable thoughts making the mind uneasy
Peace being hard to find
Emotions released
These lines reflecting the endless hope I have lingering,
Staying within the same place, they were created wondering
Wondering, if their single definition of beauty is noticed
They are taken advantage of, left to be alone
Then one day they are looked upon with desire, with admiration
They are loved for what they are
No longer confused
No longer alone

Estela Garcia
SAS 2002

Painful Shade of Blue

My head is too heavy from all my thoughts.
Millions of words jumbled
I can't form a sentence.
Never speaking what I truly feel
No one knows the me inside
Unhappy, confused, alone.
Wanting the warmth and comfort of contentment
Too many scenes play out in my mind.
My life, a three-act play.
Tonight, the stage is set.
I'm not living, just watching.
It all goes by
A blur, a daze.
The curtain falls, the crowd is silent
No applause
Everyone exits: SINGLE FILE

Tara Marie Tocci
SAS 2001

End

Stand with me in my desert of desolation and despair.
Watch and see;
My Soul is empty and hollow.
The skies are enraged and spit fires from the heavens.
All that remains are the carcasses of the dead and mutilated.
Puss and bile excrete from their every bloody crevice.
Wait with me.
Sit and wait.
The faery angel will come.
His voice is that of the one billion trumpets-
The sound shall ring.
Those who hear will shatter.
Those who feel will break.
Apart from this He comes to annihilate
All those who are suffering.
He comes to steal the soil beneath them.
He comes to obliterate.
Truly, He is mine own savior;
Come to recollect me
Rather renew me,
For I am lost.

Benedetta Serraino
SAS 2001



Untitled
Daniela Iavarone
SAS 2001
photograph

Shadow Puppets

I said I liked the shape of your shadow puppets on the wall,
Grinning teeth and ferocious.
Marionette spiders creeping low, as low as silken strings allow,
Maneuvering their meager bodies like your hands,
Fluid and sure of themselves.
Always spinning in the direction of the light
So we'd pay attention to the way the rays refracted off their creation.
Again like you,
Always in the spotlight.
Soon your fingers seemed longer and more spindly.
Weaving replaced growling until your web surrounded me,
And it was then I realized I wasn't afraid of spiders.
I was afraid of you.

Nancy Oberinger
SAS 2004

The Housewife (A.K.A Love Story)

You find me asleep in your overcoat
I find it a nice place to stay
The fifth time this week, you said
Your face wrought with dismay

My hair was tangled
Yours was greased back
I brushed the crumbs off my chest
You asked me to fish you a snack

I rushed into the kitchen
As the clock struck eight
I stumbled ferociously through the doorway
And dove for the bait

You picked your teeth
I removed the hook from my mouth
You like to shoot at the ducks
Perhaps I should fly south

Mary E. Dooner
SAS 2003

Blood Brothers

Today we will greet our guests
Make sure that we have djath speet and mish.
"Grat, bone gate pseah po ven mich"

The women of the house will make sure to keep all the ashtrays clean and I
Will keep the glasses full with raki or beer.

We will talk about our history and the times we spent together.
How we came from our country to here.
I think back to how hard we had it and this man slept in the park with me in Italy when we had nowhere to go.
Most importantly my family is here to see how
I will puncture his flesh and let his blood drip into my got.
Then I will let it slide down my throat and into my belly to sit with meze I have eaten.
He will do the same with me and that's when we will both remember
Why we have decided to be probatims.

His wife and mine have the same blood in them, relatives by the law of nature and now he and I will be the law of friendship.
Live this life out with each of us in each other
"Chone gota"

Lisa Donovic
SAS 2001

The dialect in which this was written is from Ulquin. Ulquin is a town located on the coast of Montenegro's beach.In the Albanian culture when there is a large event the head people of the house always make sure to have Albanian cheese, turkish coffee, some kind of red meat but preferably lamb should be served on this kind of occasion, and always there should be raki. There are always drinks on the table and no one should have an empty glass. The head of the house should always be at the table entertaining his guests and keeping the conversation going. The custom of becoming blood brothers follows as this, they prick their fingers and let the blood drip in each other's glass. Finally, they cross hands, like a bride and groom, and drink.

Translations:

djath- fetta cheese soaked in water and salt
mish- any kind of red meat; preferably lamb on big occasions
raki- Albanian moonshine; made from white grapes
got- glass
meze- hors d'oeuvres
probatim- bloodbrother
Gra banju gati se po na vin miqit- women get ready because our guests are coming.
choni gota- raise your glasses (for a toast)

Shoes
Heidi Hughes
SAS 2004
drawing



The Puppeteer

I created you to supply a grateful audience with a performance
I control you as you dangle high above them
Influencing your thoughts,
I move your legs and make you dance,
Putting words in your mouth
I make you fall in and out of love
Or beat someone up.
I am in charge of all that you do
And everything you do not do,
For you are my doll
And I control you.
I will choose what you wear
Dress you up nice
Put you in grunge if I so desire,
Play with your hair
Putting it in braids.
You will act as an actor
Up on stage
For entertainment,
Every slip up is mine
You need not take the blame
Since I am liable for the birth of you
And just as liable for your death,
You will bestow that charge upon me
I will construct an audience just for you
Making you the star of my show
A star if I grant you that allowance,
The choice is mine,
For I am a puppeteer and you are my puppet

Sherri Carolus
SAS 2003



Little Black Girl
Heather Fontaine
SAS 2003
drawing

My Garden

In my garden, secrets grow.
Among the whispering thistle and lilies murmuring low,
In my garden, secrets grow.

In my garden, mystery creeps like a vine.
Fleeing the sun by day, eluding me at night,
The answers I seek are never, never mine.
In my garden, mystery creeps like a vine.

In my garden, night is like a river, deep
Cool and sweet, I taste the air as I sleep.
In my garden, night is like a river, deep.

Cicely Caldwell
SAS 2002

Down by the Willow Tree

Down by the Willow Tree it laid
buried deep under dirt and hay
Down by the Willow Tree it nested and hid away,
growing deeper and deeper every day
Down by the Willow Tree it began to decay,
killing everything in its way...

Martine Beaubrun
SAS 2002

The Rabbi Twirls the Fringes on his Tallis

The rabbi twirls the fringes on his tallis.
The prey stand, murmuring softly in his den.
The knotted strings around his yellowed fingers
consistently uncoil and coil again.
A congregant beings to chant in Hebrew,
his prayer soon indecipherable and loud.
Toward the open ark they point their praises,
reclining rabbi faces toward the crowd.
The congregation sit and listen as
he finally ascends off of his throne,
regurgitates a midrash from a prophet
pretending it's sermon of his own.

Carla Eisenstein
SAS 2004

Type O

I radiate directional power
I am the key to time and despair
The missing link to complete the widest breach
I'm the remaining piece to the puzzle that makes the image come to life
I am the last morsel that fills and stuffs your stomach
I'm the sweetener in your coffee
I am the spices on your poultry
I'm the cells in your body
The neurons in your brain
The blood in your veins
Type O

Barbara Crespo
SAS 2002

Orphan

I dream of Africa and its foreign landscapes,
the unknown rivers, hills and deserts that gave life to my ancestors
and my modern-day counterparts.
I dream of Africa as I knew not except in fantasies
and manifestations of a disturbed mind, visions of a shattered life.
I dream of Africa and I mourn the loss.

Lusta Jean
SON 2002

A Daughter's Memory

So many memories are recalled when I look at you
Like the time you sat me on your lap
And held me so tightly that I could hear your heart beat.
Do you remember?
I do.

All those times you called me the princess
And told me I was your beautiful baby
Do you remember?
I remember very well

Everytime you made me feel light as a feather
Lifting me high above everyone else, on your big shoulders
Do you remember?
it felt like yesterday.

It's been more than ten years since then and now
And in that time there have been many phone calls,
Frequent visits, new families we've been part of
and much understanding
Do you remember that?
I don't...because it never happened.

Qiana Nunez
SAS 2003



Under Wraps
Anne Houle
SAS 2002
photograph

Good-bye

He watches over me from a mysterious unreachable destination
I can hear his laughter while I tell a joke around the table
Although his chair is empty, his seat is still warm
He is absent from conversation but his words are still quoted
Dreams and memories are where we can be together

I pray to him as if he were God
Asking him for guidance, strength, happiness and forgiveness
His eyes are my conscience and so I try to do right
Is he ashamed or disappointed with the woman I've become
I wish I could've seen you before you left
But couldn't bare to see you in such pain
The man I knew was strong and became stronger
Now it's too late, I wish I had said good-bye

Valerie Florville
SAS 2003

You Had Me at Hello

You said hello in recognition of us
 You must have thought you needed to explain
You said hello and made me melt like warm honey
 Emotions trickled inside of me
You said hello so passionately
 with a voice like silk it made me weak
You said hello and I wanted to cry
 because you made me ache with the feelings inside
You said hello and I was lost
 touched by the words beyond those I'd heard
You said hello and right then I knew
 without hearing the words "I love you"
You said hello and continued to speak
 uttering words floating towards my unreceptive ears
 as you went on not knowing
You had me at hello

Lusta Jean
SON 2002

Untitled [as the tracks are ridden]

as the tracks are ridden they pour out memories that exist within passengers. the words are enough to make the outside world a book of poetry that only exists through the onlooker's eye. some pens are running out of ink while others are just being picked up after years of traveling through empty pockets. as many memories as one picks up there is always room for more. packing them in at a common pace, is concept over Manhattan train tracks that are now covered in gravel. finding grooves to rest in through worn out car tires and run down cobble stone streets in the old meat packing district. west 14th street is a morning concept to the sunrise that slowly approaches the Hudson, the memories, the streets. trials and tribulations of only truth exist here. they find themselves being picked up and told through lost souls. my shoelaces tremble against the rumble of the tracks below. if you look close enough you can see Orion passing out words as we pass, before a hesitant finger hits the delete button. if you look closely, you can see a young girl crying out to empty midnight skies.you can see the mirror image, the truth here. the shoelaces resting up against the cold sidewalk of 14th street and if you listen carefully you can almost taste the wind off the train tracks on its way home.

Diana Wilkins
SAS 2002



Untitled
Daniela Iavarone
SAS 2004
photograph

Gray

Shameful to see swarms of black and white,
But no gray
The color of unity.

Shameful to see brilliant souls,
With coats of black and white glaze,
Who find that to be side by side,
Is to be unbearable,
And that to truly love thy neighbor
Is impossible.

We're a nation of opposite intention.

God said Love,
We flip Hate.
You whisper equality,
But this nation screams racism.

Ironic how America,
Land of the intelligent,
Learned racial intolerance,
Before its acquaintance with human acceptance.
How we love our same-colored back stabbers,
And not our opposite colored folks of love,
Is the question.

Until we stop hating when told to love,
Until we stop discriminating with color the cause of,
Until we stop possessing ignorance,
Until we stop making race a part of this,
Bliss,
Will be a mystery.

Erica Pitts
SAS 2002

Mirror, Mirror

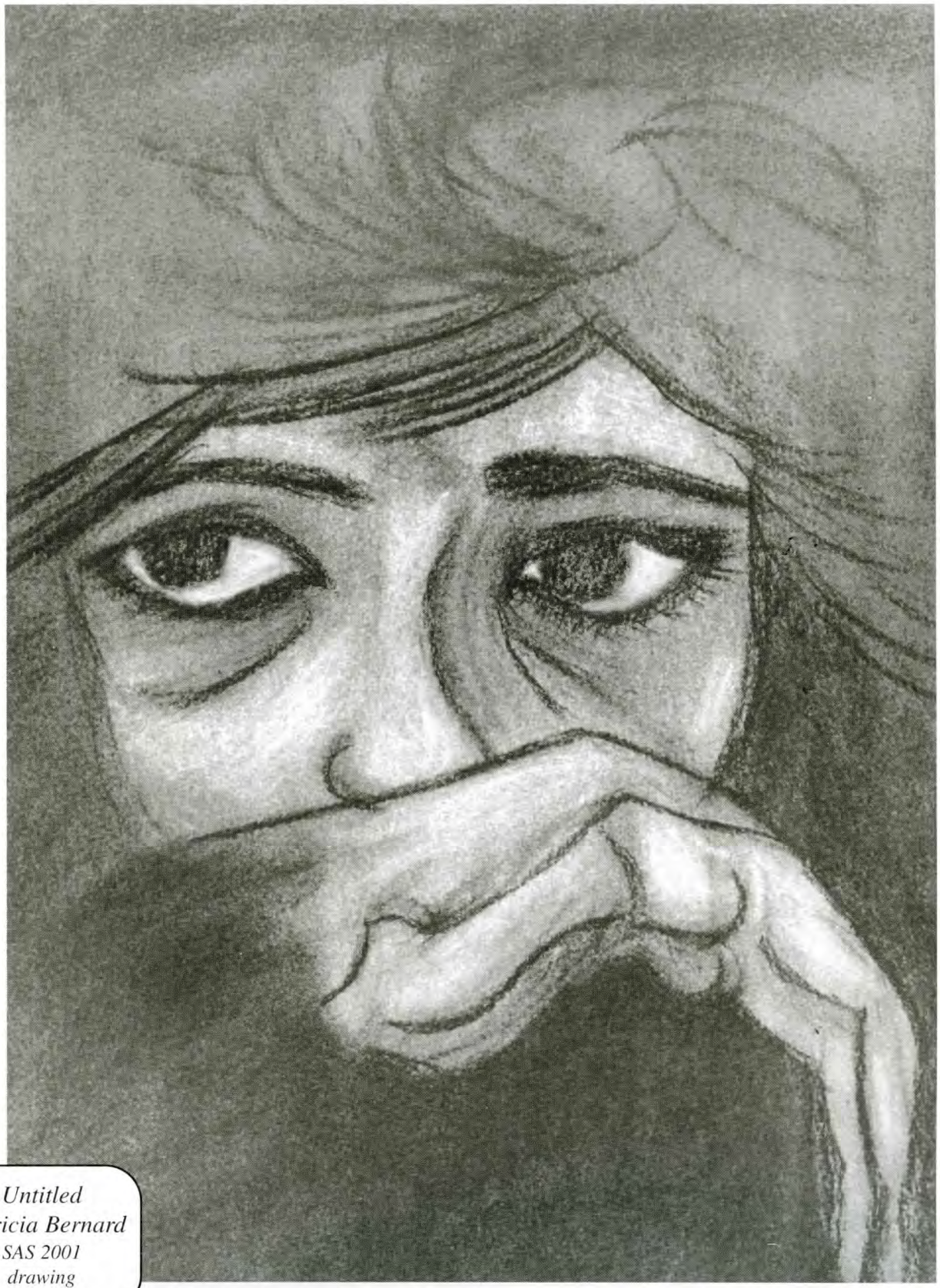
A cold black shadow
Makes me shiver
In fear
Or anticipation?
My mind deceives me
As my eyes look over your being.
My senses tell me to run
To hide
To crawl into a hole where you cannot find me
And seduce me
And make me feel.
Making me feel the passion
That should be dead to me.
A pool of ice blue,
Inviting me.
I invite you.

Jessica M. LaBella
SAS 2001

Inadequacy

Strong, thick bark, fragile leaves preparing for the seasons
Open branches, like hands reaching out to feel the open air.
Winter is near. A leaf falls and flutters before my eyes.
Colossal height climbing to the sky. Like me, Inadequacy
to rise. But in due time, in due time...

Javone Antoinette Williams
SAS 2003



Untitled
Patricia Bernard
SAS 2001
drawing

Two

Deep within my insides,
Lies my Dark side.

Sinister, Strong
Mad, and Bold.
My struggle no one knows
This struggle is Untold.

Fighting,
Clawing away at my very mind.
I Battle,
Striving to keep this darkness Confined.

Pacing, up and down
Round and round
Yet not moving.

Breathing,
While in each breath
Beseeching Mercy from Madness
Hiding within all my Sadness.

In,
Breath to keep the struggle Alive
Out,
All tension that I might Survive.

In and out
In and out
Hoping and Praying
Without use of my mouth.

I Breathe, I Live, I Survive
Awaiting the next Battle
With my Dark Side.

Jenell Wilke
SAS 2004



Boston
Mary Dooner
SAS 2003
photograph

Beautified Fear

Woke up and cried.
Drove and drove and took a drive through gardens, forests, and many oceans.
Beautiful it may be, yet I cried.
Laid in the sun with my toes running through sand and waves crashing upon my feet,
yet tears ran down my cheek.
Ran through the puddle streets as rain drenched my body and rays of sun
shot out behind a cloud.
Tear drops turned into a rain pour.
Fell asleep on a bed of roses, naked, and cried so hard
it felt as though my heart would give out.

Stacey Fatigate
SAS 2003

A Peaceful Place
Karianne M. Weber
SAS 2004
photograph



Untitled [my eyes burn to see her]

my eyes burn to see her
but hers do not see me
my hands are screaming
frustrated
denying
not being able to touch
her
surrounded by past
infernos
searching for memories
but also
water
calamity
beauty
horizon
sunrise
she is the mouth of the poet
the current of the Hudson
and the morning dew
that rests on my eyelids
burning
to see her
to touch her
inferno.

Diana Wilkins
SAS 2002

Diner

love is a diner
i am a waitress
waiting for the
next customer
to complain
about my service
and
leave a lousy
tip

Tara Kistler
SAS 2001

Temptation

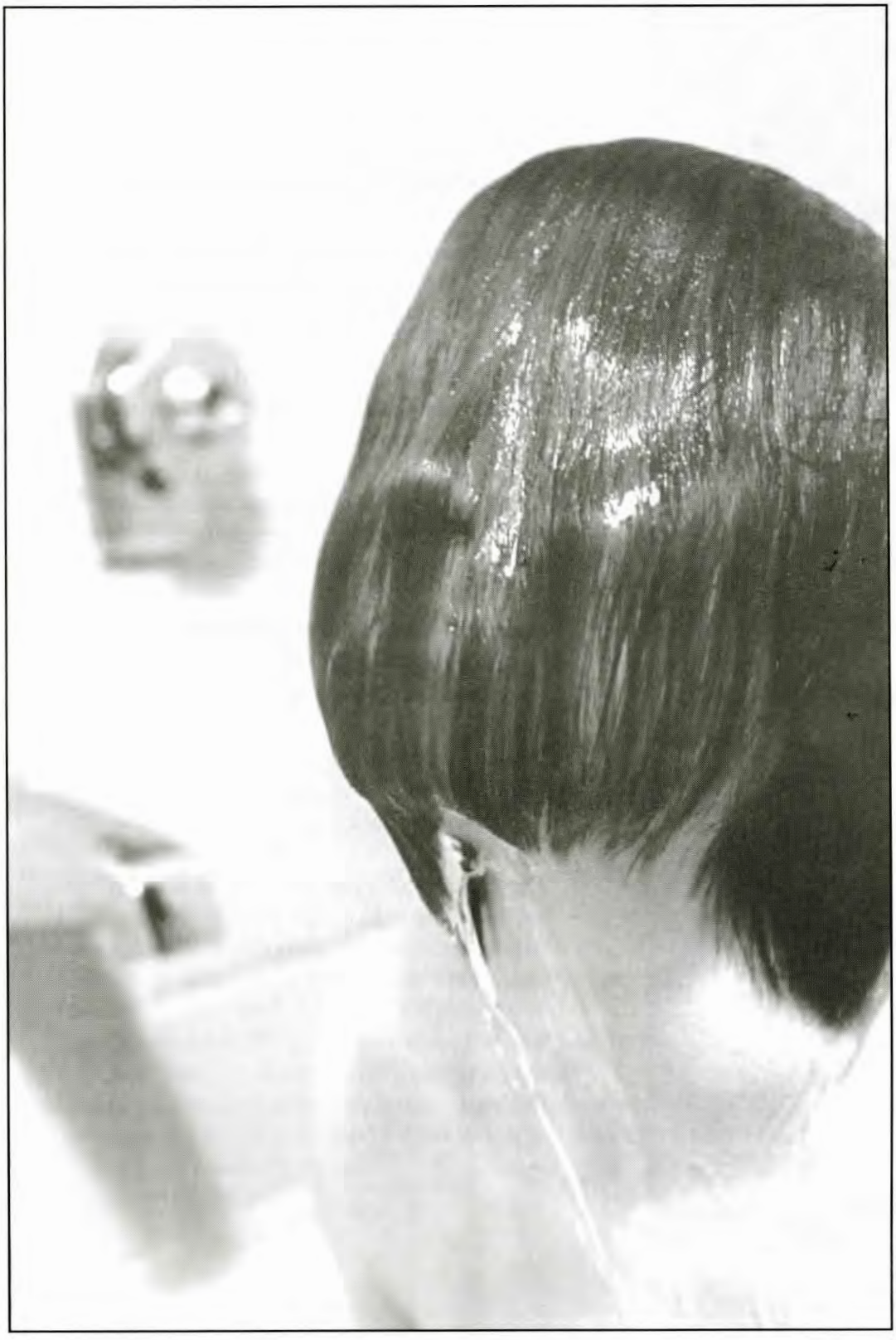
Inhibitions yielded will free for perpetual want
seduced by persistent ignorance unable to satisfy the mortal appetite
Denied all truth in exchange for lifeless terminus
That guided by all Holy lead astray

Taste unable to leave tasteless thy oral flap
quenching to the desert and barren mind
Oh but a flavor such as this abducts bliss falls short of
creating desired completion
End to all experience of Holy gift

What but ignorance allows, seeks refuge with the forbidden
Good yet good not, knows not of evil, or trickery
Lovely is the form of the path to the forbidden
two eyes perpetrating luminous grace
Sweet countenance alluring
thy purpose stems to enlighten thy actions
diminish Holy light

That which want mastered received with joy
temporary ecstasy gone as fast as virtuous state
knowing yet not knowing of happiness felt no more

Carol Murray
SAS 2002



Mask
Anne Houle
SAS 2002
photograph



Pebbles
Lori Lipman
photograph

Reclaiming the Concrete Jungle

All things crumble under the hands of time;
Leaving a space for wild things to grow.
The breath of decay has no reason or rhyme.

Empty tenements imprisoned by grime
Will slowly freeze beneath the winter snow.
All things crumble under the hands of time.

Abandoned windows choked with climbing vine
find this growing death pervasive and slow.
The breath of decay has no reason or rhyme.

Once smooth pavement laid out in grid and line
buckle gladly to allow wild things to grow.
All things crumble under the hands of time.

"Soon," the wild things chirp and chime.
"Not long now," they ominously crow.
The breath of decay has no reason or rhyme.

The dark angel's passing is most sublime,
and only the wild things seem to know:
All things will crumble under the hands of time.
The breath of decay has no reason or rhyme.

Tara Kistler
SAS 2001

Quien Soy Yo

De una isla chiquita viene
Pero de ahi no soy
Soy una mescla de culturas y ideas
Que hace una persona de sonrisas y tristesa
Mi tradiciones me limitan pero soy curiosa y agresiva
Demando de todo respeto de mi ser

Sonsiris Tamayo
SAS 2002

I Will Survive!

I ran the race.
I fought the fight.
I've been pushed down,
But I've gotten back up.
I've had my battles.
I've fought in the war.
I've lost some,
But I've won more.
No one can understand where
I come from,
It's inexplicable,
It's different,
It's strange.
I've laughed and cried.
I've been angry and shocked.
But at the end a smile always arises.
Incidents occur that I don't understand,
But I know things happen for reasons unexplained to man.
As I look back on my past and imagine my future,
One thing I noticed about my past is that I've always survived.
So at the end of the day when I think about my present,
I tell myself repeatedly that,
I WILL SURVIVE!

Nadine Alvarez
SAS 2002

Without Secrets

Her secrets wade in shallow puddles.
With lurid grace, they wait for it to rain.
Precious and excitable.
they ripple, restless until
released from her mouth
with the ease of toothpaste.

Carla Eisenstein
SAS 2004

Nostalgia

A chasm opens into a dark abyss
unknown to the creatures in still night air.
Every sound reverberates and deafens.
The trees stand like giant soldiers
awaiting a battle that will never come.
They're pawns in a fool's paradise.
As the chasm opens wider
and the abyss sinks deeper.
Evil descends and envelops the darkness,
suffocating the sun in its attempt at illumination.
Morning will never again be a part of this world.
In its place, is a stifling heat that melts the body
and chills the soul.
But no one mourns the loss,
For all is in a suspended state where comprehension is impossible.
Where night wears on and gives way to night
and death is but a cyclical beginning.

Lusta Jean
SON 2002

Dream

The night before this night, I had a running dream. I had a dream I was running through houses, mansions and neatly arranged urban gardens. I was running through deserted midtown office buildings and downtown decayed apartment houses, but not only through, but also up and down and over. My sister chased after me as well as my mother. Afterwards, I thought it peculiar that my father was not chasing. I ran New York City blocks effortlessly and tirelessly, jumped the highest walls and fences. However, I always seemed to stop when I was hungry and that's when I would get caught. Then I would have to run again. I can't remember if I read Kerouac that night before I went to bed.

Mary E. Dooner
SAS 2003



Dream
Mary Dooner
SAS 2003
photograph

Unleash The Fear

Strapping Ourselves In Just Like We Do Our Feelings
Unable To Unleash
Our Fears
Our Hopes
Our Dreams
We Can Not Unstrap Ourselves Of This Hold
On Life
On Love
On Happiness
As I Sit Here And Write
I Feel Like A Prisoner In My Own Puddle
Of Fear
Fear To Love
And Be Loved
To Give
And Be Given
Fear to Hold
And Be Held
Fear Of Having That Complete Bliss
That Complete Passion
As I Walk Through Those Doors
I Leave You
In Your Puddle of Fear
To My Puddle of Tears
That Fall
As I Reminisce About You And Me
Together Forever
I Want To Unlock The Doors
So I Can Run To You
So I Can Hold You
And Feel Your Touch Brush Across My Leg
As My Hands Run Down Your Back
Let's Unstrap Ourselves Of The Hold
Let's Encounter Each Other's Soul
Can We Remove The Dagger
From Our Hearts And Heal Each Other's Wounds
I Will Make Sure That The Dagger Never Hurts You Again
Because I Will Be There
To Love You
To Hold You
And Remove Those Fears From My Mind And Yours,
Our Lives Will Be Complete
We Can Be Content
Because We Will Have That Rapture
Of Love
Because We Will Have Each Other...

Chimere Clark
SON 2002

Rafting

my body
melts into
the bed
as the day
slowly winds down
as thoughts of the day
race through
my cluttered mind
dodging boxes of
knowledge, of memories
in its path
the body slowly
relaxes and drifts
down the river of sleep
but the mind pushes
the raft of my body
roughly upstream
the battle of sleep
is fought in my body
as I sit here and write

Debra Hedrick
SAS 2002

Waves
Lori Lipman
photograph



Who am I?

Who am I?
You ask.
I'm the woman behind that mask.
The ghost of your present and your past.
The one who keeps you startled and aghast.

Who am I?
You want to know
I am the river with never ending flow,
I am the woman who everyone yearns to know
I am the passion that's continuously on the go.

Who am I?
You beg to see.
You aspire to know the image that is known as me.
Do I have curly hair or is it kinky times 3?
What do I look like, what's my outer beauty?

Who am I?
I will tell.
The shock to the answer
Never seems to fail.

I am a woman of years plus more,
A spirit that's been around for many scores.
I am a woman
Who's the living descendant,
Of Elisha Jackson and Zelma Kemp.
I am the second oldest
Of grandchildren 13,
The daughter of a pastor,
And a preacher cunning.

I am a soon to be mother
In this world so bleak.
The hunter of life;
The knowledge I seek.

I am a woman
Forced to do more than my share.
Looking for someone to love me
Someone to care.

I, my dear, am a woman
Forced to face the world,
When all I want to be
Is a very little girl.
But the information I give you
Is no more than a sham,

For not even I
Know who I am.
Who am I?

Banae Vickers
SAS 2004

Eye
Tara Kistler
SAS 2001
drawing



Apples And Ham

I saw a picture of your little girl
up there, on the wall the other day
there were other people in the room
so -- I couldn't really stare,
but I can still see you in her.

I guess it was Halloween
she was sitting in her carriage
dressed up like a cat or a lion or
something like that.
Her eyes were wide, pudgy little face.

How real your world became to me then
even though I don't know that side of you
maybe you really do love her mommy
and stay because you really want your life
together to work
just the way I always did with "him"

Maybe I'm causing something that shouldn't be.

Then I thought that's you
a little you
a little part of you
you watched on through her pregnancy,
through her birth.
You are daddy.

Then I thought, maybe I'll never have you
in any way, shape or form.
Then I thought, I'll never know how the children "he" and I
would've had will ever look like or be like.
For all I know he could have that with
someone else .

That night you came here
your stuff in a baby bag
with Teddy Bears on it

and you talked about how many of those
the two of you got at the baby shower
and how your little girl would soon be
one year and one month
and the jar of Gerber Baby Food
in your car-Apples and Ham-and
you said you gave her a kiss before
you left that night.

I think to myself
this isn't me
I would never do this
but I can't deny what I feel
what I feel sexually

the way I light up and smile
when you're around
the feeling I get when I see you
or when you smile at me
or touch me
It's not going away anytime soon.

I don't mind that you belong to
your little girl,
maybe deep down I mind that you
really belong to someone else.

It's just my luck that when I begin
to move from "him"
it's someone else's man
I stumble on

But, I don't mind the fall at all.

I just keep thinking of Apples and Ham.

Diana L. Creaturo
SAS 2002

We Were Innocent

We were innocent once
When the sunrise was marvelous
And new beginnings
And soft skin
And eyes that knew
Nothing
And everything was nothing
And meant everything
We were innocent once
When cries and tears were not the same
When tears were not tears
And cries were desire
And smiles were not imprisoned
Within the walls of inhibition
We were the future
And the future now past
We presently destroy
With the present passing of presence
Passing of innocence
We were innocent when
Yes was yes
And no we did not know semantics
We were innocent before the murmur
Before the word assimilated us
Into your world
Before the step we took
Guided by you into the world you ruled
Before the question created by you
That you ask that we ask you to answer
But we know
And we knew before we knew
How new we were
To the corrupting world
We were innocent once
When day met night
And stars melted into sun
And sky was sea
And shore was womb
With room for no more than the innocent
Before the scales were tipped against favor
For survival
For the innocent

Before scales were scales
Before life was survival
Before the innocent were soiled
With the blood of their innocence
Before the lines we created
Became our own cells of incarceration
The reincarnation of the scent of fresh flesh
Beckoned cyclical creation
The light we worship is reflective
As reflection damns the corrupted
As reflection corrupts the innocent
We were born into your world of mirrors
Into your damaged atmosphere
The air
The breath
Singes smoky rivers
And murky veins
As we swim in your love
Let the innocent remain
Or let them never be
The children of corruption
We were innocent once
And we are innocent no more

Jessica Elexis Hamilton
SAS 2003



Caged Children
Daniela Iavarone
SAS 2004
photograph

Nature in Two Parts

Part I

At Dawn
The air is the freshest
All the birds sing their song
My state of being is peaceful

As the day grows
I miss the dawn
My state is of confusion

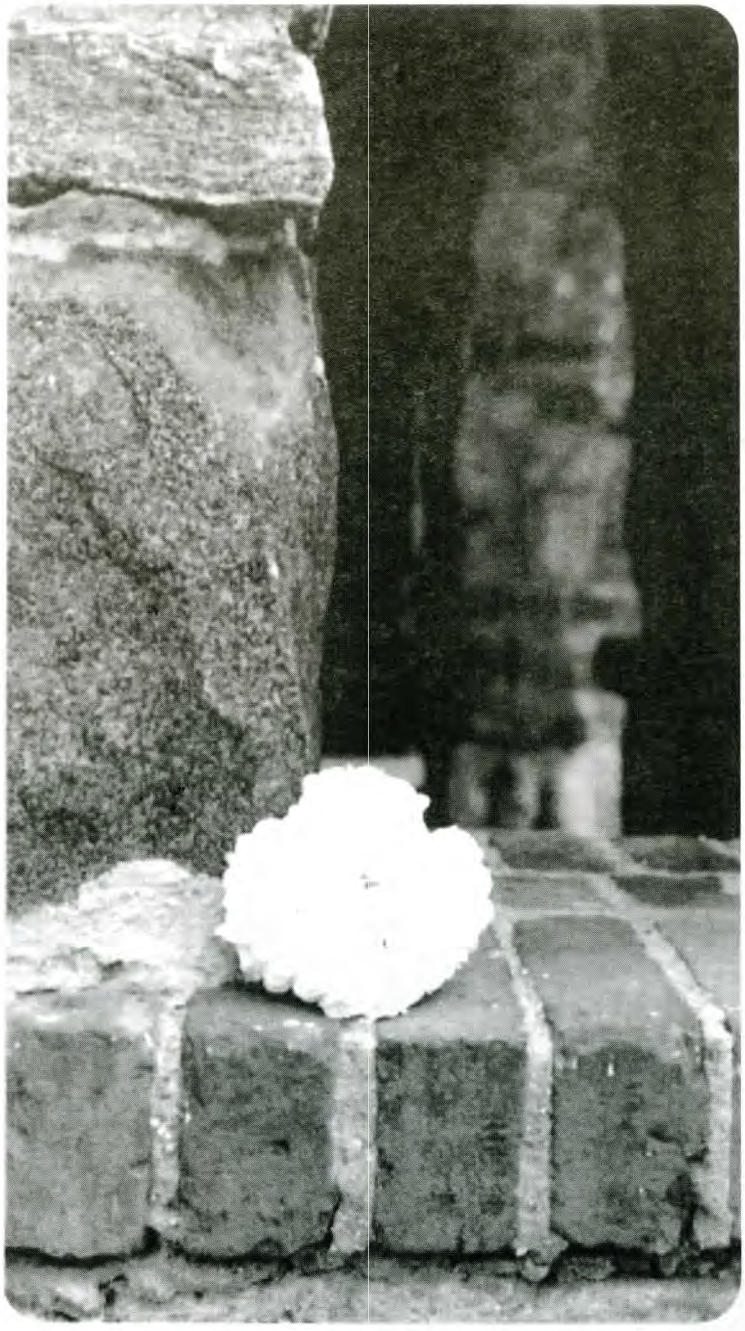
Night falls
And I dream of dawn
The sweet bird songs
My soul at peace

Part II

The moon shines down
On the hill tops
Sets the stage
Magnificent display
Pulling and tugging at me
Luring me in like a magnet
The most sensitive beings
Seduce me with power and energy

I lay down
Looking up in awe
The night so calm
Under its trance
I bask in the illumination
Of the night sky

Barbara Crespo
SAS 2002



Carnation
Lori Lipman
photograph

Who AM I?

IT ALL STARTED WITH A SIMPLE PAPER DUE FOR A CLASS. IT WAS TITLED WHO AM I? AN ESSAY ASSIGNMENT, ONE THAT COULD BE DONE IN YOUR SLEEP. BUT IT WASN'T. IT TOOK ME ON A JOURNEY, A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY, OF PLEASURE AND PAIN. SADNESS WITH JOY. APPREHENSION, WIT, FEARLESSNESS, COWARDICE AND COURAGE. AND AT THE END OF MY JOURNEY I KNEW MORE THAN WHEN I HAD BEGUN.

Who am i? i don't know. i asked my best friend in the whole world and she said i was tipsy. ready to tip to the left or the right. never still, bouncing off the walls with pent up energy, at the same time standing still.

I ASKED MY SISTER, AND SHE TOLD ME THAT I WAS MOSS. A FUNGUS WHICH GROWS IN DARK AND DAMP PLACES. AN INDEPENDENT FLOWER NEEDING VERY LITTLE SUN LIGHT TO GROW AND FLOURISH. TINY IN STATURE YET SO MAGNIFICENT PEOPLE ARE HELD IN AWE, ALMOST SPELL-BOUND AT THE SIGHT OF IT OUTSIDE OF A STONE, SO COLD AND UNFEELING. STEPPED ON AND DISCARDED YET ABLE TO SHARE ITS BEAUTY WITH THE BAREST GLANCE AND THE QUICKEST SMILE.

i am told that i am like a time bomb, with a short slow burning fuse, just ticking away, waiting to explode. able to destroy everything in my path. i'm like the winds of the sierra. bringing with me pain of sands and the fresh breath of a summer storm. the gentleness of a cool shower, with the rage of a hurricane. life and death all within my control.

I AM THE PHOENIX. BORN FROM THE FIRE. ABLE TO SOAR INTO THE HIGHEST FLIGHTS OF THE SKY. A BEAUTIFUL BIRD OF GREAT COLOR AND SOUND. STRONG AND UNYIELDING. I PERISH IN THE EXACT THING THAT GAVE ME LIFE ONLY TO COME AGAIN FOR ANOTHER CHANCE.

who am i? i am a protector of what is mine. the lioness i am astrologically predestined to become when my young are threatened. a mama bear who hears her cubs crying and charges into anything to save them.

WHO AM I? I AM A BLACK WOMAN OF THE 90'S, STRONG. I AM THE LITTLE GIRL WITH BONY KNEES SITTING ON A BACK PORCH IN GEORGIA, LONGING TO HEAR THE "EL" TRAIN IN NEW YORK. I AM THE TEENAGER ON HER TERRACE IN THE BRONX WISHING TO TURN BACK THE HAND OF TIME. PRAYING FOR THE SOUNDS OF COUNTRY AND SMELL OF PEACHES FRESH FROM THE TREES. I AM A COLLEGE FRESHMAN ON A JOURNEY TO FIND MYSELF. WHO AM I? I AM THE SISTER, FRIEND, LOVER, HATER, ENEMY, PROVIDER, PUNISHER, NURTURER, WORSHIPER, AND CONQUEROR OF MAN. WHO AM I? I AM NATARA PATRICE HAMILTON!

Natara Patrice Hamilton
SAS 2003

The First Kiss

I remember our first kiss,
the first time I touched your tender lips.
That unforgettable night when we stood under the moonlight
and you stared into my eyes and I into yours.
I remember feeling your heart beat against mine
as you leaned in and brushed my cheek with your fingertip.
I remember you holding me in your arms, while I stood there knowing
I was completely in love.

Martine Beaubrun
SAS 2002



Young, Black Woman, Embrace your Sexuality
Melana Rodriguez
SAS 2004
painting

Ecstasy

My eyes shut to darkness at a rapid speed.
My heart races at an infinite pace,
as butterflies within, fly to an unreachable place,
My ears burst to an elaborate octave,
as you embrace me, touch me, set me ablaze,
I settle into the endless pit of your passion, beauty, love and grace
and wish I could stay in this euphoria until mortality takes me away.

Martine Beaubrun
SAS 2002

The Podium

As I walked toward the podium, I could feel my legs begin to quiver. My mind became blank and my heart pounded in my chest so hard that I imagined my blouse would fly open, giving me a reason to flee the scene. However, I proceeded. When finally reaching the podium, I glanced into the audience. "She didn't come," I said to myself. "Oh, just pull yourself together. You knew she wouldn't come," my conscience criticized. I took one more glance into the audience, I wanted to cry, but instead I took one hard swallow and I smiled.

Javone Antoinette Williams
SAS 2003

Untitled
Patricia Bernard
SAS 2001
drawing



Short Stories



Adventures on the Lunatic Patrol

Rebecca Teetsel

SAS 2001

Stella drove to work with all the windows down. She liked to have them open even on cold days. There was something about all that artificial wind that made her feel free and made the city seem less ridiculously crowded. The sun sat on the horizon getting ready to sink. It was moving the other way when most people were making their way to work. These same people owned clock radios and read romance novels. Stella had no clock radio, or any alarm clock for that matter. It's like they say 'buy a clock radio and that's the kind of life you're gonna have'. As for the romance novels, Stella felt that these people should stop deluding themselves and just buy porn directly. Whoever 'they' were, Stella was not one of them and because of that she was both amused with them and in contempt of them in equal amounts.

Mornings had never agreed with her, which made a night job essential. Stella worked the overnight shift in a local psychiatric hospital as a nurse's assistant. In contrast to the 'theys' who more often then not were bitter about going to work, Stella loved her job. She loved interesting people in general and there was no shortage of them on the ward. Her shift started at 8pm and ended at 6am. Usually, she got there early enough to get the lowdown on the day's events. Marie, one of the day nurses, told her that it had been a quiet day and probably would be into the night, but then again with lunatics you could never be sure.

After the briefing, Stella went about setting out the night time meds. There was something soothing about the soft clicking of the little capsules and tablets of many colors falling into little sterile white cups. Filling the cups was the easy part. The patients weren't always as cooperative. Stella finished in time to do a little walk around before the actual distribution. The ward where she worked was a temporary ward. It housed "crisis" patients from the ER. While there, they were evaluated and a plan of attack was established. Most patients were there for a week or less before they were sent either home or to a long-term facility. Tonight the ward was housing six patients. Three of them were garden-variety depressive types who had attempted suicide, then changed their minds, and found their way to the ER. They got a lot of those. One in particular, Gwen, held a season ticket as it were. Gwen showed up at the local ER several times a year with a belly full of pills and eyes full of tears. She was shuffled around a bit, received some therapy, and was sent home, having been deemed "stable" again. Stella

tried hard to be sympathetic to these patients, but it wore on her, and most often she felt nothing for them.

"And I used to be such a nice person," she thought.

The depressives struck her as the type of women who read romance novels and collected recipes. At least they would be if they had a little more self-control, or self-delusion. As it was their lives were too hard to have time for anything but self-pity.

Two of the other patients were also types seen often on the ward, only they were a lot more interesting than the depressives. They were schizophrenics, who had been living on the outside, un-medicated, who were caught, in public acting strangely (in one case standing on the sidewalk naked and condemning passers-by to hell). Once caught they were arrested and sent here to be evaluated and medicated.

Stella had her most memorable encounters with the schizophrenics. You never knew where a conversation would take you. They often said things that didn't seem to fit with the topic of conversation and laughed at inappropriate times. To Stella, they seemed especially free. Many of them were light sleepers("I have to keep on point tip, let your guard down and they get you"), so she had spent many a shift having fragmented conversations. It was fascinating to hear how tiny foil soldiers could protect you from evil and that pictures got headaches.

The sixth patient was a more unusual case. She was a seventeen-year-old girl named Abigail. Her mother, who had discovered that Abigail had been cutting herself, had dragged her to the ER in hysterics. Stella could not help but feel sorry for her. She didn't really belong in a psych ward, but Abigail was a few months shy of making that decision for herself. Abigail had been there for two days floating around in a medicated haze. Angry slashes of various shades of pink covered the pale underbelly of her arms. Battle scars from the war against herself. Stella made every effort to talk to Abigail during the scattered minutes when she wasn't in a fog. She was a really sweet girl and Stella was caught off-guard by her dark sense of humor. She reminded Stella of a friend she had in high school. The one she would sneak smokes and laugh at the clueless with. Abigail knew herself very well.

"In a choice between feeling pain and feeling nothing, I wanted pain," this was her conclusion of her situation. Stella could see her point.

Nine-thirty came out of nowhere, medication time. Stella and the head nurse made the

rounds and it went smoothly for the most part. The only snag they hit was David, a very paranoid schizophrenic, fresh from the ER.

"I'm not taking anything. Don't you think I know what you people are up to? I'm on to you, you hear?"

"Well, David," Stella replied, ever calm, "I can understand if you don't like pills. There are lots of other ways you can take your meds."

David considered this for a minute, his eyes jumping around.
"All right I'll take the goddam pills, but don't you dare call me Stella."
"No problem David."

The rest of the night was very quiet. Quiet nights gave Stella too much time to think. Mostly she wondered if any of the patients really belonged there. How was it determined what behaviors were crazy? Who drew the line between eccentric and lunatic? To Stella, Abigail's behavior was no crazier than people who regularly drank themselves into blackouts, or slept around, or had a lot of piercings. She didn't think that most of the schizophrenics were any crazier than people who put bandannas on their dogs or followed miracle diets. That is probably why "lunatics" make the "average" person so uncomfortable. They must realize the arbitrary nature of the labels.

"At any rate," Stella thought, "no matter how ridiculous I find this system, I'm glad its working in my favor for the moment."

As time passed her thoughts turned to the more inane. She contemplated whether or not she needed to stop at the store on her way back home and if she had remembered to feed her goldfish. After office hours, the world of the ward seemed almost surreal.

The shift had flown by. Six o'clock came out of nowhere and the day people began to creep in, yawning with coffee in hand. Stella shuffled herself to her car in the soft purple light. Windows down, she drove home, arriving just as the sun was coming up.



Angelina and Eddie

Jessica LaBella
SAS 2001

Once upon a time, I lived a normal life.

No, scratch that. I don't think my life was ever normal.

Once upon a time, there lived a boy who liked to pretend as hard as he could that his life was normal. He liked to fake this regular existence to all of his school friends. He was the crazy one, the class clown. He talked too much. He was a joker.

No one knew the nightmare that was my life.

My name is Eddie. I hate my name. I am named for my father, who beats me, and who beat my brother. I hate my life.

I lived in Maine until last summer. My father was a raging drunk who would thrash me till I was a bleeding mess. When it got too messy, he'd move onto my mother. She finally got the nerve to kick him to the curb. Yea, and we had to flee the state. My life is still not all that standard.

I'd pretend that my existence was fine. None of my friends knew of my horror. I'd go to school, arm in a cast, stitches decorating my face, and grin through the swollen tissue. "Man, you should have seen the skateboarding tricks that I did yesterday. Before I fell on the street of course." They'd laugh, take me as a hero. No one knew me.

I walk down the halls of my high school, searching for a face, a glimmer of recognition, a friend. No one sees me. I just moved to this town, and I hate it. I'm a sophomore and everyone seems to have their ready-made cliques.

I tried to gain acceptance, believe me. I started out trying to get out of the nerd-filled Honors Classes. These classes, I believed, were a 'surefire' way to meet the totally uncool population of the school. Unfortunately, I was "too intelligent" and had "too much potential" to be put in the non-regents level classes.

The first day of school, I tried to dress cool so that the geek patrol would realize that I was not on of them. I figured that by wearing my Nirvana tee shirt, flannel shirt and torn jeans, the hip kids would see me as a kindred spirit. No one even saw me.

Try out for the school play, my mother goaded me. I love to act. But no way, dude. Only losers do the drama club in high school.

I would have tried out for soccer. Not that I've ever played before but... you know how unprofessional the soccer team in high schools are. Unfortunately, trying out for soccer isn't as easy as you would imagine. They held tryouts last spring. I was too late. Surprise.

Today was the worst day of my life. I was sitting in my (Honors) math class. It's the easiest class that I'm taking. As I mentioned earlier, I am very "bright." Things like math come very easy to me. Anyway, as I was sitting in my usual seat, I noticed that the girl in front of me was wearing Doc Martens. Purple Doc Martens. Very cool. I was impressed with them, and I also saw that she had a Soul Asylum patch on her book bag. This chick must be cool, I thought. It had been so long since I'd had any friends. I figured I'd talk to her after class.

The teacher calls on her. Angelina. Her name rocks. Her voice is raspy, raw, she answers the question right.

The bell rings. She gets up, tosses her blonde hair over her shoulder, and just goes. I glimpse her face, set and serious. She has the most beautiful profile I've ever seen. Sigh.

My best friend called tonight. He lives in Maine, down the block from where I used to live. He asked me how "Fast Eddie" was doing in New York. Ha ha, my old nickname. You would never guess where it came from. I guess I have a way with the ladies. Or did, anyway. Well, I didn't have much to tell him of course. He was disappointed.

Once upon a time, there was a girl. She was incredible. She wore black nail polish, and put purple streaks in her hair. She wrote the lyrics to Nirvana songs on her books. She walked through the halls with a sullen look on her face, her lips pursed, angry at the world and at humanity at large. I wanted her bad.

It was in that very same HONORS math class that I had tried to transfer out of that we finally came to talk. This class was filled with the most random of people. Sophomores, juniors and seniors, geeks, nerds, cheerleaders, jocks and the most beautiful and popular people in the school all meshed into one hideously boring Geometry class.

I was tapping my big, stupid foot on the back of her chair. I was trying so hard to think of a way to talk to her that I wasn't paying any attention to my bodily movement. Suddenly, in the middle of the teacher's surprisingly upbeat discussion of parallelograms, there she was, in my face, a glare formed in her beautiful blue eyes...

Sigh.

I looked up from my problem, into her eyes, and felt myself flush. I knew the only reason that she would be so angry was the fact that I was tapping, and suddenly my tapping was way loud, and I wondered why no one had stopped me before.

I felt like crap. I stopped tapping and whispered "Sorry."

Damn, how awful did I feel? I mean, here I am, trying to speak to the girl, and I single footedly screw it up. I suck.

I didn't hear a single word that my teacher said for the rest of the class. All I could think about was that I had blown it. I had screwed up the one chance I wanted at this new school. I wanted to be her friend, her boyfriend, for so long. I thought that she would make everything all

right in this awful school. I thought that she would be able to make me feel better about the divorce, make me not guilty for ruining my parent's marriage. And maybe give me a little bit of a fun time.

The bell rang, signaling lunchtime for me. Another awful aspect of my school: lunch at 10:30 a.m. Who the hell is hungry at 10:30 am?

I scooped up my books, threw them in my book bag, and prepared to run away. Then I decided to take action. I couldn't make it any worse, now could I?

She bumped right into me, looked surprised. Not too angry. I took a deep breath. "Hey. I am so sorry for annoying you before." And I think you are a goddess.

She wasn't infuriated. "Oh, no. I'm sorry. It wasn't really bothering me that much..."

"No, its ok. Don't feel bad, I shouldn't have been doing it. If you hadn't stopped me, that big dude next to me would have. And he's not nearly as pretty as you."

I stop abruptly. Did I just say she was pretty? Woah, dude, I did. Is that cool? See why they call me Fast Eddie? Its not because I'm sexually advanced, its because I speak before I think. She looks distressed, but maybe that's embarrassment. Jesus. I keep going.

Me: "What's your next class?"

Her: Silence. Painful silence. "Oh, lunch." Then she grinned. "Or should I say breakfast, at 10:30 in the morning." Ha ha ha.

I laughed. "I know. Its stupid! I have lunch now too. but I usually don't go. I usually go into the library." The library? Foot in mouth, foot in mouth.

I tried hastily recover stating "I don't really know anyone here and since the people pride themselves on being totally unfriendly, I would rather be alone." I wish I could shut up, but this is how I get when I'm nervous. And she is damn cute. And walking with me.

"My name is Eddie. I just moved here from Maine." We were down the hallway now, towards the cafeteria.

"I'm Angelina. Are you a freshman?"

"I know you're Angelina. No, I'm a sophomore. Aren't you? You're in my sophomore math class."

"No, I'm a freshman. I took advanced math last year. I am a geek, I know." I smiled. "How do you know I'm Angelina?"

You sit in front of me in math."

Ok, stop right there. Am I being too open? I don't know. But she's not like, "Okay there lover boy, get lost" so I figure, hey, maybe she likes me. I am so happy.

We get to the caf and get in line. " What do you usually eat?" I ask, hoping that she'll take the hint and eat with me. "Um, chicken sandwich. And chocolate milk."

"Sounds good." I got the same, and we walked towards the cashier. I paid for both lunches, and turned to her. Oh, the look on her face. She looked, well, happy. It was amazing

to see this girl happy. She walked around so angry most of the time. I decided I wanted to make her happy all the time. Then she stated, "You cannot pay for me. I will not stand for it." I said, "Why?" I was crushed. Maybe she wasn't happy. I didn't know what to do. Then she said my name.

"Eddie, "she said, "you just met me. You really didn't have to do that. "I smiled and said, "I don't do anything I don't want to do." She blushed. How fuckin' cute is that?

We walked out the side doors, and over to the big tree that she said was a favorite spot of hers during her incredibly boring and lonely lunches. Two senior girls, clad in blue and white cheerleading uniforms, were walking towards us, sharing the narrow expanse of sidewalk. Suddenly, *Crash*, the girls slam into me, and I very nearly spill our chocolate milks. Instead of apologizing for their clumsiness, they look mildly bewildered and walk on by. I grin at her sheepishly, hoping that she won't notice how no one notices me.

As we ate, we talked. We spoke of things that people talk about when they are new to each other. We talked until my throat was raw (remember I hadn't spoken much since school began and I talk too much as you can tell).

I am going to be absolutely cliché, but we clicked. I felt like I had been lost in the woods in the freezing bitter winter cold, barefoot, wandering around, branches, and today, in math class, suddenly stumbled, frostbitten and bleeding, into my warm cabin, where Angelina was waiting for me in front of a crackling fire, with thick wool socks for my feet and some hot cocoa. Does that make any sense to you? Is that too much of a romance novel fantasy for you?

When the bell rang, she sighed. "Ugh, time for Global Studies." I rolled my eyes, smiled, and helped her up. We were silent. Awkward. Being a teenager is helplessly distressing.

When we got inside, I turned to her and said, "Oh my class is down here..."

"Oh, ok...mine's upstairs..."

Cumbersome silence.

I broke the silence with a half smile.

"I'm glad I met you today. Its taken me a long time to have the nerve to talk to you."

She looked down, embarrassed, but I could tell she was pleased. "Really? Why is that?"

"I dunno. I guess I've always felt kind of invisible. No one here knows who I am, so I've kind of become a loner. I don't know...I didn't want to bother you."

Suddenly, it was the best day of my life. She looked right into my eyes, saw the boy that lived an incredibility fucked up and abnormal life, smiled, and hugged me. " Meet you after school?"

"Sure!" We smiled a parting smile and went out separate ways.

Reflections at Seventeen

Sonsiris Tamayo

SAS 2002

The school bell rings and Joanna and Jason ask "Do you want to go over Marco's?" but I decline the invitation because I have to go to work. "Sylvia, you are always working, when do you even take the time to think about you? Anyway, if we go over to McDonald's can you hook us up?" Joanna asked, "sure I got ya'll, see ya'll later." I replied and off to work I went.

I couldn't stop thinking about what Joanna said as I walked down Broadway and saw all these high school students, seemingly without a care in the world. Am I the only one with issues and who has to work? Damn, this is hard - my life sucks - but I have to try to think positive and stop being such a prophet of doom. What about all those senior citizens who are trying to get a bus to get out of Riverdale to get their prescription drugs or to Waldbaums or Edward's to get that bottle of painkillers that goes on sale today and that they have a fifty cent off coupon for, or to get a pint of Lactaid milk - do they think about who they are and who they have been? - are they satisfied or do they just stay busy to avoid retrospection and introspection as I try to do by keeping occupied all the time.

I still don't know myself, perhaps I never will- it is a constant battle I go through every day of my life - Who am I? What is it that I do well and What do I feel? Questions I can't seem to answer without contradicting myself. They are questions that I have to think about every day. Dollar, dollar-said the man in front of the discount store as he smiled at me and I smiled back - everything one dollar, sometimes two or three for one dollar!

How awful to be anyone but me, wow! -I love myself - look at these rosy cheeks and these cute little dimples and when you see my pearly whites - oh, irresistible - not only that, but who can be more caring and loving than I. When you need a shoulder to cry on and a friend that listens and not only talks all the time when you have a problem, you can come to me for comfort and guidance.

Never, never, never I will reach the perfection I long for with all my soul. I yearn for it with all my heart as I try to be everything they want me to be, they-my parents, my teachers, my friends, my boyfriends - even with all my talk and actions, there will always be that imper-

fect - that I love myself for having.

I see my reflection in the IHOP window as I pass by. There will come a time when I must face myself at last, when there will be no escaping my decisions and I can no longer procrastinate. What college? What major? What career? What man? How many kids? Is that what I want? I, a bird awaiting true freedom in little less than a year. I absolutely hate all my restrictions in school and at home - can't stand it! I just want to know that I can fly anywhere if I choose, even if I just fly to the corner store for some turkey and cheese.

My life is just beginning, Right? I am only seventeen, still a baby, isn't that what all the old heads say? I am strong and I will get stronger day by day. I wait for the day that I know my cause or purpose for living on this earth so that I can make it mine, so that it can be my drive and, because I long for my happiness that surely this will bring.



Sundari

Mary Job
SAS 2001

The talk in town has reached fever pitch. It is all about Sundari. The beauty has made a bad name for herself, just as her mother said that she would.

She was caught with a boy. The two of them holding hands; she, a Hindu and he, a Muslim. The religious, careless lovers tried to meet.

The men folk are still trying to figure out how Sundari managed to get out of her confinement. They do not know that I still have a key from when I resided here at the theravadu--the palace.

Sundari is under house arrest now. Her fate needs to be determined. The boy--Mustafa's son Hamid--has been sent north to Bangalore to stay with his uncle. Hamid had to go. Poor boy. He was beaten the day after his treacherousness was discovered. No one knows who committed that crime.

But I saw it all from my window up here. It was the group of youngsters from Palakad--Brahmin cousins of Sundari. They are angry at and jealous of Hamid. None of the boys--Suresh, Venu, Gopi or Rajendra--were able to woo their beautiful cousin. Now each is secretly thankful that he had not publicly announced his interest. How disgraceful that Sundari allowed herself to be involved with a Muslim cherakan-a Muslim boy.

Sundari has not spoken since her guarded imprisonment. Has the imprisonment broken her will? She could take her previous imprisonment, ascribed to all women. At least then she was not constantly watched and she had me to help her out by unlocking doors, so that she could run free outside the theravadu gates.

It was on one of those nights that I let her out that she had met Hamid. Hamid was sitting under a mulberry tree in the garden by the lake. He was singing a tune that he had heard earlier that evening at the movies. I heard Sundari say later that it was a funny song, which distorted Hamid's face every which way. At one point, Sundari swears he looked like Hanuman, the monkey god.

It was then that she laughed. It was a clear, high-pitched laugh. It went through Hamid. It touched every bone, muscle and vein in his body. He began by loving her laugh. She began by loving his face.

Sundari still loves him. I can see it in her eyes when she looks out of her window sometimes. I do not know if Hamid still feels the same way. I have heard that he will be wed soon to a Muslim girl form Thekady. Just as well.

Let Sundari forget him. Her house arrest will be over soon. Sometimes, such an episode in a girl's life stops her from continuing with life. Many girls have let themselves be so overtaken with grief that all they see is a knife in one hand and a sari with which to make a knot in the other. I know.

I wish I could see Sundari now. I am still in the master suite--Sundari's room. The menfolk have put the beauty in the room opposite--the harvest storage room. Sundari must sleep on the sacks of rice, as there is no bed there.

Our windows have bars. It is nothing new for us. Most windows on houses in Kerala have steel bars on them. I look through my bars constantly to see Sundari, but she has not come by the window this morning.

She can not hear my call. No one has heard my call in about nineteen years now. That is okay, though. It was my choice-this life-so I have lost the right to complain about it.

But I used to have a beautiful voice. Oh yes. And a laugh! My laugh was as clear as my Sundari's, but my laugh, it stayed with you. My laugh did not go through its listeners; it penetrated them until they thirsted of me. That was what had happened with Muhammad Kutty, Sundari's father.

Kutty seemed to have gravitated towards me. One day, I looked out my window in the master suite and saw his face staring back. It was a funny face. A young face. Later I found out that he was also sixteen.

We spoke a few words to each other that day. Our words grew in number and importance daily. In a few months, we knew what we felt for each other--sneham. It was that feeling where you would die for your lover in order to live with them forever. It was at that point that we knew that we had to have each other.

That was our greatest mistake.

We were so young, my Kutty and I. We did not consider the tradition of our families and our beliefs. We forgot. That moment that sneham arose between us, we forgot.

They found out. The menfolk. Just like it happened for Hamid and Sundari. We were quickly separated. I was confined to this room. Kutty to his uncle's place in Bangalore. He never married, I heard. I never saw him again. but he did see me. He came to my funeral pyre a

year after our separate confinements.

I had Sundari two weeks before the combustion. No one knew about the pregnancy or delivery except for my brother, Damendra. He had taken me to a place north, near Mumbai, for my nine-month stay. The town thought that I had left from shame. After Sundari was born, Damendra had brought her back here cloaked as an abandoned child for him and his barren wife to raise.

Just as well, I had thought. That took the burden off me raising her. I left my only one with Damendra and walked into the master suite. I found the sari in my cupboard. It was a pink chiffon sari with blue rain drops on the edges. I hated the beautiful sari. It was so perfect. I knew they would have to burn it after my hanging, and they did.

My sari disappeared quickly, but I remained. It was very lonely those first years. The master suite was unused and rarely cleaned. I learned to live through dust.

But then, on her thirteenth birthday, my Sundari moved in here. My beautiful one. I had named her Sundari because she was so beautiful when she was born, just like my pink sari. I knew she would be trouble and I needed a name that would be perfect for her.

But she was no trouble. She was a good girl. Damendra had taught her too well and she had listened too well. But when she turned thirteen, I got her.

I began whispering of fantasies and freedoms into her ear as she slept. I laughed my laugh, bringing men to her window for her to look and wonder at. I unlocked her door so that she could go out and find him--Kutty's nephew. It was all perfect.

But now, Sundari is in the storage room with the sacks of rice. Now she is there and I am here! And these bars separate us. I have not yet shown my Sundari her sari. The beautiful yellow one also in the cupboard. Now it is too late perhaps.

Damendra knows. He knows that I am here. He heard my laugh this morning as he came to check on his daughter, while I was thinking of the fate of my beauty. He will surely take Sundari out of the storage room soon and bring in the jolsyen who will consult his astrology and tell Damendra what needs to be done to rid the house of evil spirits.

Perhaps I will not be able to do everything that I had planned. But, at least, the town is talking of Sundari and her ill repute. Maybe that is enough to break her will after all.





Rose
Lori Lipman
photograph

